

**THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF 18 PLUS GROUPS**

**Minutes of the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference held on  
Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2005 at the Britannia Hotel, Coventry**

**THOSE PRESENT:**

Vice President/National Executive Officer	Gerry Edwards
National Chairman	Wayne Fenton
Honorary General Secretary	Donna Verrall
National Finance Officer	Tony Burgess
East Anglia Area Chairman	Joe Gurney
London & South East Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman	Andy Cole
Midland Area Chairman	Dot Sallis
Northern Area Chairman	John Smith
North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman	Tracy Thorn
Southern Area Chairman	Tina Bunyan
Members of the Federation and invited guests.	

## **2 OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE BY THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN**

The National Chairman, Wayne Fenton, opened the Conference by saying that he hoped everyone would have fun at this Conference, as well as the serious side of it and that points made must not be personal. He went on to say that delegates are there to represent their Groups and they must observe all Conference procedures. He continued by saying that he applauded members on comments he has heard, this means members have been listening at the Training sessions and looks forward to debates over the next couple of days. National Chairman, Wayne Fenton, went on to say that with the options coming up, none of these will work without the members going out and getting more new members.

## **3 THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY GERRY EDWARDS, VICE PRESIDENT**

Vice President, Gerry Edwards, welcomed everyone to the 64<sup>th</sup>, and probably most important of all, ANC and hoped that over the next day and a half, everyone would enjoy themselves, even though it would be a challenging weekend for all. Gerry Edwards, Vice President, told the Conference this was his 24<sup>th</sup> ANC and still got as much kick out of it as his first and hoped members would feel the same and that it is also nice to see some new faces. He went on to say, following in the late Linda Street's manner, would everyone shake hands with those near to them, introduce themselves, and start the Conference in a friendly manner.

Gerry Edwards, Vice President continued by saying that this ANC has to be a watershed for the Federation and that a number of serious decisions have to be made for the Federation to continue and develop. He assured members that all parties involved in putting the various Options together had spent a great deal of time and effort in doing this and that delegates should listen to each Option carefully before making any decision. It is critical that debates are not personalised and also that some of the Options will affect the staff, who are present to help with the organisation of the ANC. The visions within the Federation could cause its' demise, whichever Option is chosen, therefore, anyone backing any particular motion must ensure the success of the Federation. Any hostilities that arise during the Conference must not be taken out of the Conference room, everyone must be able to have fun tonight.

Gerry Edwards, Vice President said, from his personal perspective, there must be a great deal of heart searching and constructive debate at this Conference and asked everyone to be patient with speakers. He said he was delighted to see so many delegates and observers and said it was vital that members take part in the decisions made and urged members to take part as much as they could. Everyone has a right to be heard and it would be good to see everyone at some point, speak during the weekend.

He reminded everyone that whilst the main objective of this ANC was the Options, this also was an opportunity for members to ask questions of the NEC.

## The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups

He said that the NEC worked very hard for the Federation, and made decisions to see the Federation survive, but also reminded the members that they had voted for NEC members on to the executive.

Gerry Edwards, Vice President, trophy presentations would take place during the Saturday evening entertainment, to recognise individual and Group achievement and hoped that members would go home invigorated after the ANC. He then closed by congratulating Kirsty van Lieshout, ANC Chairman and her team on their new ideas for the Conference weekend.

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends delegate made a point of order to the National Chairman by asking why a Motion was missing from the Agenda, which had been correctly submitted and could there be an explanation.

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary, replied by stating that according to Citrine, the motion mandating the NEC to restructure became a resolution once it was passed. As part of the motion, the NEC had to seek feedback of the Groups and, until the ballot takes place, it remains unfinished business.

You cannot have a motion on an Agenda that alters an earlier decision, therefore, it is not possible to accept So'ton Friends motion, on the basis that it would result in the winner of the ballot being announced and immediately after the Conference would be asked to consider addition Option D as a possibility. As the NEC has rejected it an an option, the So'ton motion is, in effect, seeking to restructure the Federation differently to the winner of the ballot.

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary, went on to explain that it is not a question of juggling the order of the Agenda – until a ballot has taken place, the NEC has not completed its' mandate from last year. She reminded the Conference that the NEC has rejected Option D as a possible alternative structure for presentation to the ANC, but it could be presented to the 2006 ANC – if there is one – because by that time the ballot would have been completed and the direction of the restructuring motion known – i e: either National, Area of Member Lead).

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends replied by saying that this did not answer his question as the motion that was passed which became a resolution last year had a termination date by which it must be implemented, therefore the NEC empowerment has now ceased and a new motion date put forward and not a continuation of prior business.

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary said that last year's motion empowered the NEC to re-organise the Federation's management structure and implement with effect by January 1<sup>st</sup> 2005, meaning it can be implemented any time after that. Richard Morton, So'ton Friends replied that if this were so, "in effect" would mean the new structure would be in place by that time. Wayne Fenton, National Chairman informed the Conference that a letter had gone to every Group in October 2004 advising them that there would be a delay in the Option implementation and also re-sent early in 2005.

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends still insisted that the NEC empowerment had now ceased and that Option D had been rejected by the NEC because of time, to which Wayne Fenton, National Chairman replied this was not so.

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends then challenged the Chairman's Ruling and Wayne Fenton, National Chairman asked him to wait until after the tellers had been appointed.

#### **4 ELECTION OF TELLERS**

Christopher Porter – Brentwood Group; Phil Bettis – Coventry Group; Mike Shapcott – South Bucks Group and Kathy Morris – Solihull Group were elected as Tellers. Block seconded by Northwich Group.

Voting strength established at 60.

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends then re-introduced his challenge to the Chairman's Ruling based on the exclusion of Option D from the Agenda. Seconded by Northwich Group and backers provided by Barkingside and Banbury Groups.

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer then established exactly what was being voted on by stating that the challenge to the Chair was because the Option D motion had not been taken on board, however, the NEC mandate expired to get the restructuring done as of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004. He asked Richard Morton to clarify his challenge to the chair as to either it was rejected from the Agenda today and should it be allowed or it is because the NEC acted outside their remit? Richard Morton, So'ton Friends replied that he was challenging on both points.

Corinna Teale, External PRO made a point of information by saying that under ANC Procedures of Standing Orders, item 3:3 "The General Purposes Sub-Committee shall recommend to the NEC the withdrawal of any motion which it considers unsuitable but the NEC shall not withdraw a motion without the proposers' consent", therefore, if the said motion was submitted before the deadline for ANC Agenda items, the NEC cannot refuse it if So'ton Friends want the item on the Agenda.

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary thanked the External PRO for her comments and said that because this is unfinished business from last year, until the ballot has taken place, other motions cannot be accepted that could change the result of the ballot. Richard Morton, So'ton Friends, asked which document was being referred to in relation to the "unfinished business". Andy Campbell, delegate Barkingside asked if it was unfinished business and So'ton Friends proposed a solution why the NEC did not accept it, could this be explained? Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer replied that the Option D was rejected at the January NEC meeting because the overall aspect is that at the ANC 2004 it was proposed and accepted that the NEC manage the restructuring of the Federation. They worked all through 2004 taking opinions and options and information from members and finalised the three Options on the Agenda at the January 2005 NEC meeting, making sure that all three proposals were as good as they could be.

## The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups

Option D was presented to the NEC about one week before this meeting, therefore, the NEC felt that they did not have time to give this Option the due consideration the others had been given and also that the NEC felt it was quite similar to the Area Lead Option. The NEC did commend So'ton Friends, however, on the good work they had done in putting this Option forward.

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer went on to say that it was the NEC Options that were mandated to come forward, having been empowered by the ANC 2004. Groups were all notified of these Options and no-one came back to say things were not right, so the NEC took this that it was an extended mandate by the Groups and carried on. He explains that the challenge to the Chair is that either with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, subject to agreement of the Groups, put a time limit on the NEC empowerment or whether it is just a target date that the NEC were aiming for and have gone slightly over.

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends then stated that conversation within ANC 2004 made it clear that the Federation could not wait another year, so whilst he agreed a letter had been sent out it did not give the NEC an extended date. He said that So'ton Friends were not asking the NEC to go through Option D diligently, as they felt items had been included in it which had worked in the past for 18 Plus, but just to put it forward as it was a valid option.

Hazel Bunker, Barkingside delegate asked if this challenge was voted for, would this mean all the other Options would be thrown out, to which the National Chairman replied they would.

Andy Campbell, Barkingside delegate said that instead of voting to a challenge to the Chairman's Ruling, should the conference vote on the acceptance of Option D along with the other three Options. Chris Brandon, Northwich delegate said that Option D should be included on the Agenda, as a lot of hard work had been put into this Option.

Voting strength re-established at 61

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends delegate withdrew the challenge to the Chairman's Ruling.

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman then informed the Conference that the NEC had decided to accept So'ton Friends motion – Option D as an amendment to the Agenda.

### **5 ELECTION OF BALLOT PAPER COUNTERS**

Janet Rintoul – Bradford Group; Nicola Poppitt – Coventry Group and Joanne Taylor – Black Country Group were voted as Ballot Paper Counters. Block seconded by Brentwood Group.

**6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Martin Mays, Direct Member, Steve Sheldon, Direct Member and Rita Grimes, Honorary Life Member.

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary then gave the amendments to the Agenda, to include the Group Lead Option D. This will then be added to the ballot.

**7 ACCEPTANCE FO THE MINUTES OF THE 63<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE, HELD AT THE BRITANNIA HOTEL, COVENTRY ON 24<sup>TH</sup> & 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2004.**

There were no amendments to the Minutes.

Proposed: Black Country  
Seconded: Banbury

CARRIED

**8 MATTERS ARISING THEREON**

There were no matters arising.

**9 PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE FEDERATION'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2004.**

The Federation's Report for 2004 was accepted.

Proposed: Black Country  
Seconded: Northwich

CARRIED

**10 PRESENTATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE FEDERATION'S ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup> 2004.**

Rob Blanks, Abingdon delegate asked why the purchase of a new copier was not included in the accounts to be told that it was purchased in 2005.

Proposed: Brentwood  
Seconded: Sutton Coldfield

CARRIED

**11 ACCEPTANCE OF THE REPORT OF THE ACCOUNTANTS**

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer proposed the acceptance of the Report of the Accountants.

Seconded: Didcot

CARRIED

**12 ELECTION OF THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN TO SERVE FROM MONDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2005.**

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman asked Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary to read the nomination for the position of National Chairman, and she announced there had been one nomination from Wayne Fenton, National Chairman.

Proposed: Northwich Group  
Seconded: Barnet Group

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman said he had been National Chairman for the last year and believed he had done a good job asked for members' votes so that he could continue as National Chairman if they thought he had done a good job. He knows he has done all that has been asked of him during the last year and again, asked members to vote for him.

Martin Berry, Black Country delegate asked the National Chairman what he could achieve during the next twelve months what has not already been done and he replied he does not know at this point, it will be dependant on which Option is voted on to take the Federation forward. Huw Morris, Oxford delegate asked the National Chairman to confirm whether or not he would be restanding if a certain Option wins the ballot, to which the National Chairman declined to reply. Venita Olayemi, Coventry delegate pressed Wayne Fenton for an answer as she thought this would be quite important. Wayne Fenton, from a personal point of view, said there were two options he does not believe he could work with, but would not state which ones. Kate Buse, Slough delegate asked what would happen if the National Chairman did stand down after the votes on the Options had taken place, to which he replied he did not know. She also went on to say that she thought he had done a good job during the past year. Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary replied saying that the most senior Area Chairman would become Acting National Chairman until the July NEC meeting when a National Chairman is elected.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield observer/External PRO said she admired the National Chairman for not stating which options he did not like so that this did not influence the delegates and urged members not to pressure him any further.

Mark Randall, Black Country observer told Wayne Fenton he should be commended for his enthusiasm at all levels, therefore, he personally would like it if Wayne was there to lead the Federation forward. Richard Morton, So'ton Friends delegate suggested delaying the election until after the votes on the Options had been held. Andy Cole, London & South East Area/deputy National Chairman said a vote had already been taken to change the Agenda around, did members want to reverse back? Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate asked if Wayne did not restand as National Chairman would be run Brean again, to which he replied no, the main reason being he thinks it is in really good hands now.

Andy Cole then asked the Conference when the ballots would take place for the National Chairman and other National Officers and the vote was that it would be taken on the Saturday.

Voting strength re-established at 61.

**13 ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS TO SERVE FROM MONDAY  
16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2005**

**13:1 Honorary General Secretary**

**Francis Wallington**

Francis Wallington, National Training Officer told Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate he felt he was the right candidate for the job at this present time of HGS because he had been an 18 Plus member for many years and had held numerous posts at all levels. Martin Berry, Black Country delegate asked what Francis' strengths and weaknesses were, to which Francis Wallington replied that they were tenacity! He also said he was very active within the Federation and had held many committee posts. Paul West, Andover delegate then asked Francis what management experience he had had as some of his responsibility would be to close down the office and was told that this was one of the reasons he was applying for the position, as he felt some responsibility towards two individuals, not to be mentioned at present!

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman then informed the Conference that as no presentations had been given on the various options, these must not be commented on during the question and answer period.

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends delegate asked if the nominees could explain their roles to the Conference. Francis Wallington then explained briefly the role of the Honorary General Secretary. Mark Randall, Black Country observer asked Francis if where he lived could cause a problem with being HGS, to which he was told it would not.

**13:2 National Finance Officer**

**Andy Cole**

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer told the Conference what the National Finance Officer's role consisted of, as per the National Constitution. Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman was asked by Ian Crawshaw, Plus News Editor if Plus News would continue to be funded as at present if it is to be issued as currently in a hard copy version and was told this would be an NEC decision.

**13:3 National Development Officer**

**Adam Redshaw**

Adam Redshaw, National Development Officer explained his role as National Development Officer and said it was anything that could help the Federation prosper as a whole. Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate asked why all the paperwork from the previous year's training event had been destroyed and was told a mistake had been made, for which the NDO apologised.



Martin Berry, Black Country delegate asked how the NDO felt he could help the Federation over the next twelve months, to which Adam Redshaw, National Development Officer replied to the best of his ability. Francis Wallington, National Training Officer, then asked what future projects would be and was told, dependant on whichever Option is voted in, hopefully make a National DVD, a “Meet New Friends” website and hopefully, form links with NUS. Paul West, Andover delegate then asked about future plans for developing 18 Plus perhaps by use of the Internet. The National Development Officer replied that as well as ideas mentioned earlier, better use of communications and improve attitudes within the Federation. Jo Stewart, Havering delegate said that, as a student and dealing with the NUS, how would 18 Plus be publicised, to which Adam Redshaw said he would discuss this at a later date and may be in conjunction with the EPRO. Venita Olayemi, Coventry delegate asked if there were any other organisations, other than the NUS that the National Development Officer could work with and was told there may be, but at present, he would prefer to concentrate on the NUS and the wide range of facilities they cover.

**13:4 National Activities Officer**

**Dave Filer**

Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate asked Dave Filer, National Activities Officer what experience he had for running activities, to which he replied he had been involved in AMMO, Area activities, Group Chairman, Group Activities Officer and said he liked co-ordinating activities, preferring activities to administration. Adam Redshaw, National Development Officer then asked if Dave Filer had an opinion on how 18 Plus activities should go forward and was told he would like to see a majority of activities carry on year to year, with some new ideas being included to supplement these. There were so specific new ideas at present. Adam Redshaw then asked about Health and Safety knowledge, and was informed that Dave Filer had knowledge of this and also who to ask should he need further information. Paul West, Andover delegate asked for any strengths and weaknesses Dave Filer could bring to this post, to which Dave Filer replied by saying he can draw on his experience of 18 Plus life.

Venita Olayemi, Coventry delegate then asked if his career change would affect his job as National Activities Officer and was told that he would co-ordinate events, encourage others to organise events and not actually run them himself, but would always be available to offer help and advise. Venita then went on to ask what was “AMMO” and would it be re-introduced. Dave Filer explained it stood for Amateur Mini Mad Olympics and was organised by what was the South Essex Area, and was a knock out weekend. He said it was unlikely to be re-invented as an event like this needed a lot of organisers and eventers, but would always be open to offers if someone had an idea on how to stage this event.

**13:5 National Training Officer**

**none**

**14 BALLOT PURSUANT TO MOTION 15:4 OF THE ANC 2004**

“The management and structure of the National Federation of 18 Plus Groups is to be reorganised according to, either the National Lead Option, Area Lead Option or Member Lead Option, the vote for which will be by ballot. Such management and structure to be implemented according to the supporting documentation for each option.”

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends proposed the motion:-

“That “Bottoms Up – Option D”, otherwise known as Group Lead Option, be included in the available options to choose from for the future and restructuring of the Federation at the ANC 2005. It will have an equal amount of time for presentation and debate so that the delegates have the opportunity of making an informed decision.”

Proposed:                    So'ton Friends Group  
Seconded:                 Banbury Group

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends then went on to say that this motion should be supported because of member choice. All the options should be heard for the restructuring of the Federation. If a free and frank debate is not forthcoming for all the options, how can members be sure they have supported the right plan? This proposal is not about whether Option D is accepted, but that it should be debated. The word “Group” was missing from the other options. Unless all Options are debated properly, then delegates have not done their job properly. He urged members to vote for this motion.

Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate seconded the motion by saying that 18 Plus is about empowering its' members and members are what makes everything happen and this is what this motion is all about. The issue of this motion is not about the Option D itself, but the chance to debate it with the others. He urged members to vote to be heard by voting for this motion.

Tony Burgess, National Finance Officer spoke, on behalf of the NEC, against this motion, by saying that the NEC had decided to throw the rules out and put this item on the Agenda, but did not change their views on it. The compromise was it is now on the Agenda and delegates must now vote whether to accept it or not. He strongly opposed the previous speaker's comments that members were not consulted, they had been all the way along, eg: Area Lead Option was originally the Clean Sheet, set up by members themselves. He said the NEC cannot support the So'ton Friends motion, not because it was not a good one, but because of the time scale being allotted to reviewing it, as had all the other been.

Ian Crawshaw, Plus News Editor congratulated both So'ton Friends delegate and the NEC for coming to a compromise. Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate urged delegates to vote against this motion as she felt it has been forced on the Conference by ambush.

## The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups

She upheld the NEC reason for not having it on the Agenda and felt to ambush the Conference as not the way to go. Sharon Law, Redbridge delegate said that the Federation is changing; members must be able to make their own choices. She acknowledged the National tier work very hard, but that this motion should be accepted and debated. Adrian Barnard, Didcot delegate said that he agreed with the National Finance Officer, that at no time had members of the Federation been excluded from making any input into the Options put forward and urged delegates to vote against this motion, as his members had not had the opportunity to debate this as the other three put forward. Chris Brandon, Northwich delegate said he had seen this information at Brean and that his Group had made time to discuss it along with the other three Options and urged members to vote for this motion. Mark Randall, Black Country observer said there was a significant difference in Option D from any of the others; it is clear, distinct and different and urged members to vote for this motion.

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends replied by saying that the National Finance Officer had said rules had been thrown out to put this motion on the Agenda, but it was the power of the delegates that caused this. He also said that drafts of the other Options had not been published, therefore, members could not comment on them. He said there had been two months between Option D being presented and a posting going out. Is this not enough time? He urged delegates to carry this motion so that a constitutional debate can occur. So'ton Friends had distributed this motion to as many people as possible so that it could be discussed at Group level. The choice now lies with the delegates.

Voting strength re-established at 61.

CARRIED

The draw took place to see in which order the Options would be debated, thus giving no Option any particular preference over the other.

The draw was done by Gerry Edwards, Vice President/NEO and the results were-

1st	Option D - Group Option
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Option A - National Option
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Option C - Member Option
4 <sup>th</sup>	Option B - Area Option

### **15 PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BY DONNA VERRALL REGARDING THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE FEDERATION.**

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary opened her presentation by saying that she is sure that every one knows how the Federation is run, but stated the fact that it is an organisation run by its' members for its' member, no affiliation to any political or religious organisation.

## The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups

It has three levels, Group, Area and National, each with their own committees with a regulatory function. She went on to inform the Conference of the committee positions and their functions. Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary continued by saying that whilst usually, the National level was run by the more experienced members of the Federation, this was not always the case as some members preferred to stay at Group or Area levels. She said that at National level, the only voting members were the Honorary General Secretary, Finance Officer and six Area Chairmen, with the National Chairman having a casting vote, should it be necessary. Anyone holding a committee position at any level, with the exception of a Vice President, must be a current member.

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary went on to say that during this Conference, the members would be taking part in a ballot to look at restructuring the Federation for the future, by reducing costs and levels of bureaucracy. She said that last year the National Executive Committee were mandated to investigate a new structure for the Federation and, taking into account the amount of investigation and work, it was not possible for this to be done by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, therefore, this is why the ballot is being held at this Conference. Each Option will be presented to the Conference, in no particular order, questions allowed after each presentation and debate taken after all Options have been presented. The debate and, hopefully the ballot, will take place on Sunday morning.

Corinna Teale, External PRO/Sutton Coldfield delegate then asked if the NEC would be liable for any debts the Federation may incur, should 18 Plus become bankrupt. Wayne Fenton, National Chairman told the Conference that contingencies had been put in place in order to prevent this, but Corinna Teale said this could not be stated at present, until it is known which Option is voted on. Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary stated that, should there be an accident and the Federation is sued, the Federation is covered by its' insurance policy, this having been confirmed by both the Federation's insurers and solicitor. Regarding fraud, one would hope the courts would allow the Federation to recover the money from the person committing the fraud. However, it could be the members of the General Purposes Committee who would be personally liable should there not be enough money in the bank to cover bills, etc, but the General Purposes Committee do keep a close eye on the Federation's finances.

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends delegate asked what the legal status of the Federation was and was told 18 Plus is an unincorporated association.

### **16 PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF SO'TON FRIENDS GROUP OF OPTION D – GROUP LEAD OPTION BY RICHARD MORTON AND KIRSTY VAN LIESHOUT**

Kirsty van Lieshout ANC Chairman/So'ton Friends Chairman and Richard Morton, So'ton Friends delegate then presented the Group Lead Option with Kirsty van Lieshout opening by saying that Groups should take charge of their own social lives and the means to do so. Each Group being different and unique, thus making 18 Plus so great and without Groups there would be no Areas or National. She went on to say that being part of this organisation, she can go anywhere and make and meet friends.

## The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups

The last year has been a hard one for the Federation and the Group Lead Option can put the fun back into Plus. This Option would give £25 membership fee, £10 going to Insurance for the Federation, blank membership cards, upkeep of the website and a small contribution towards another ANC. The remaining £15 is for the Group to make its' own decision on how to spend it. Group and Area committees would be elected annually and each Area would send two representatives to the National Council.

Richard Morton, So'ton Friends delegate then summed up by saying there were eight main points of this Option – Groups and members being the most important part of the Federation; the Office would be closed saving £25,000 per year; the Bulk Posting, currently going to one member of each Group would be replaced by an e-mail going to all or more members; Areas slimmed down slightly, there would still be an ANC; Groups would run events; invest an upgraded website with a centralised calendar; membership fee going mainly to the Groups.

Kirsty van Lieshout ANC Chairman/So'ton Friends Chairman continued by saying that all the main events would still take place as long as there were members willing to organise them, so if members are willing to take responsibility for their own social lives, then vote for this Option and put The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups back on the map.

Giles Kirby, West Kent delegate asked if the age range would be opened up and was told it would be kept the same. Adrian Barnard, Didcot delegate asked if there would be one Area meeting per year and was told there would be one Annual General Meeting per year and after that it would be at the Groups and Area discretion, perhaps three times per year. Martin Berry, Black Country delegate questioned the Chairman's vote, as per Page 9, and Richard Morton told him this would be at the Group's discretion. Martin Berry then said should not the Chairman have the casting vote? Martin Berry, Black Country delegate then asked if it was meant, with a virtual office, there would be no actual paperwork and was told, again, this would be at the Group's discretion. He asked how members would be contacted if they did not have Internet access and Richard Morton replied by saying that for those who did not have this access would be able to reply on those that did. Martin Berry then asked if there was a central system for keeping track of memberships and Richard Morton told him that the insurers required the Federation to keep a data base and that there would be a centralised database.

Sharon Law, Redbridge delegate then said she was a little confused as she had read one thing about the memberships in the document but thought the presentation had said something different and was told the £25 was the total membership fee to be paid. Stephen Sykes, Didcot delegate had some questions about the Office and asked how the specification came to be about the Office and the web site, and was told there was a team of individuals which included some of So'ton Friends members and Banbury Groups. He went on to ask how they were going to gain feedback from the members and was told the team putting together the final solution would gain this information. He was also told that within the document itself was a transition giving information to the NEC.

Stephen Sykes, Didcot delegate asked lastly why an individual virtual office option had been chosen rather than one off the shelf and was told those to buy off the shelf could not be suitably adapted to the Federation's needs.

Sherrie Roberts, Redbridge delegate then asked the timetable for implanting the virtual office and was told this information was in the document, a slow transition from the current date up to February 2006. Rob Blanks, Abingdon delegate said he assumed there would be no more Area events but was told they could be organised by the Groups, he also asked about the figure for ANC incentive. He was advised that whoever won the competition to run the ANC would win £100 as a bonus for their hard work. Finally, Rob Blanks, Abingdon delegate queried the ANC levies for Groups and was told the Groups could set their own levies. Ellen White, Rothwell delegate asked how much it would cost to run a virtual office compared with the current manual office and was told the manual office cost approximately £25,00 per year with the virtual office costing and initial set up £10,000 fee with £800 ongoing per annum. Venita Olayemi, Coventry delegate asked if the membership fee would go up eventually and was told it may not as there would still be a surplus of fees, having removed the cost of the Office.

#### **17 PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BY ANDY COLE AND JOE GURNEY ON OPTION A - THE NATIONAL LEAD OPTION**

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman introduced this Option by saying that all of the Options presented today were potential solutions to the Federation and that some items were common to them all. He introduced the National Lead Option to the Conference. Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman continued the presentation by saying the National Officers of the Federation had not stood still since the last ANC and had made progress on the Business Plan agreed at the previous ANC.

He said there had been an additional National event, reduced the Office accommodation costs, succession planning had been put in place so that the still level of service and expertise would be continued once the number of staff was reduced, the website had a new front face, communication with members had been increased through Plus News and the restructuring documents. Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman went on to say that more changes were still needed in order to provide a financially stable Federation and one in which members want to stay and will also attract new members.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman continued by saying the way ahead proposed is to construct and philosophy to enable the remaining aims of the Business Plan to be met. This Option proposes reduced operating costs by reduction of staff, reducing the number of committees and changing the way in which the Federation's income is collected, change in the membership charges, reducing costs to Groups, a wider age range.

Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman then told the Conference how the Federation would be organised by saying maintaining the National identity and structure is important, giving the National tier responsibility for setting certain policies to include membership records, setting membership fees and charges, maintaining the web site, conducting national publicity, discharging the legal obligations – e g: tax and insurance; continuing the services conducted at National, supporting office staff. Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman then explained the policy set would be by the National Executive Committee, consisting of 6 Area representatives, the Finance Officer and Administrator. The National Chairman would have a casting vote and the Vice President would hold an advisory role. The Finance Officer, Administrator and National Chairman would be elected at the ANC. Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman said 6 National Project Officers would support the NEC and undertake specific roles, to include activities, publicity, development, training, publications and the web site. These would be non-voting positions and would be elected at the ANC, except for co-option into vacant posts; the NEC would not be able to appoint any national officers. Officers and committees to run specific events would still be appointed by the NEC for events such as Breathe and the ANC.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman said the Areas would see the most changes, the current Areas remaining unchanged initially, however, it is proposed to simplify the Area structure, remove the Area committee and bring the Groups and National closer together. Committee posts and running costs would be reduced, an Area representative would be elected to represent the Groups at National tier and this member would be a voting member on the NEC. The representative would concentrate on supplying good communication between Groups and National and this representative would be elected at the Annual General Meeting and an optional deputy could also be elected, if wished, so that, in the absence of the elected representative they could attend NEC meetings. Each Area would have a budget to be funded through the National tier, for this representative. Existing Area accounts would be closed and funds divided amongst the Area's Groups.

Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman said, just as now, there would still be an ANC, giving all members a chance to have their say in the running of 18 Plus. All National Officers would be elected by the Groups at the ANC. The ANC would also be the opportunity to reward and recognise those members who had excelled within the Federation during the previous year. The NEC had indicated at the previous year's ANC that the level of majority required to pass motions for constitutional changes at the Conference would be reduced and this was temporarily reduced from 75% to 50%. Generally, motions presented at ANCs affect the future of the Federation and with a 75% majority, this gives the minority the control, therefore, this Option proposes reducing the 75% majority to 66.6%. With 60 voting delegates at an ANC, it needs only 15 to decide the Federation's future under the present system. A reduced majority, therefore, could give the Federation a better chance of adapting to change in the future. The new slimmer structure of the Federation will also be brought into the organisation of the ANCs in future.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman continued the presentation by saying that Groups will be slimmed down, like the other tiers, giving a reduced emphasis on committees and meetings and more emphasis on activities. Each Group will hold an Annual General Meeting giving those elected officers more chance of getting into their role than the current six monthly structure. There will be two constitutional positions, Group representative (current Chairman) and Group Treasurer, other positions are optional, to be chosen at each Group's discretion. There will be no maximum terms of office except for the Treasurer, which is required because of financial regularity. Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman said under this Option it is intended to open up the age range from anyone over the age of 18, each Group being able to target their own age range. Groups will still be able to retain the right to refuse any memberships, should that person be deemed not suitable. Direct Members will continue to be monitored by the NEC and will continue to pay a premium on top of the normal membership fee and will also be available via the web site. Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman then explained that with no upper age limit, all members will be classed as Full members and all 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Groups will become Full member Groups. Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman said no changes were proposed to the Direct Membership scheme, no postings will be sent from Area, only National, but Groups may post to Direct members if they so choose. Direct members may, if they wish, have their details listed on the web site and in the National Directory. Should the number of Direct members increase significantly, then the way they receive their communications may be revised.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman went on to say that National events such as Brean and Group events will continue as before. Area or National scale events will see the most change, being run by Groups or a number of Groups and may be supported by National for the larger scale events. Event levies will be apply to National events or those events underwritten by National.

Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman said that sometime the topic of membership fees dominates discussions and the cost differential between the existing fee and that proposed is small and despite the small increase, it will have a positive impact of the efficiency of running the Federation. Members have been paying between £25 and £29 for the past few years, but the cost of running the Federation is between £35 and £45 per member. As proposed in this Option, in future Groups would pay levies and membership fees direct to National, with no Area tier, and the aim would be to keep membership fees in line with operating costs. Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman then explained how the membership fees would benefit the Federation. He said that currently the fee is £29 for a Full member and in addition, there were National and sometimes Area levies on top of this. By reducing the Group fees, the Groups would have the option to either reduce their weekly subs, or to spend it on events or publicity. By reducing the levies, it would also reduce the burden of these levies on the smaller Groups. Taking into account the levies paid by the Groups, the cost per member would be on average £1.50p more under this proposed Options. Ignoring the affect of the Associated member, the average increase for full members would be approximately 50p.



## The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups

Despite this being a small increase, the benefits would be of significance to the Federation, making the organisation more financially viable and Groups potentially more funds to spend as they see fit. Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman said the membership fee of £40 is less than one third of a pint of beer per week, great value for access to so many Groups and National events.

Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman then told how there would be a number of options on how to pay the membership fee; full payment on joining or renewal, payment by instalments on quarterly bank standing orders, the initial payment being made by cheque, then by standing order during the remainder of the year; Direct membership may be done on line, as will full members wishing to rejoin and pay the fee in full. A small additional fee to cover processing costs will be incurred for those paying on line.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman then told the Conference this Option proposed to continue with the Office but with only one member of staff, therefore giving opportunity for reduced office costs, not needing the space currently used. All office duties will continue as at present, thus relieving voluntary members of the burden of these jobs, e.g: membership records, insurance, etc. Without the help of paid staff, it would be difficult to find members willing to fill positions, such as Administrator and Finance Officer. Office services and printing would also be offered to members of the public, also helping office costs.

Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman this National Lead Option also gave a number of additional plans, which would benefit the Federation as a whole and are in line with the Business Plan.

Changes would be made to keep the Federation in line with society and legislation and these would include on-line memberships, electronic mailing, job descriptions for National Officers to be revised and formal meeting attendances reduced. This Option would also give the Federation the opportunity to apply for charitable status in the future, giving a number of financial benefits.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman then summarised by saying that this National Lead Option kept the National Federation's identity and aims, all the changes being in line with the Business Plan agreed at the ANC 2004. The structure keeps the National organisation with local Groups, but removes the intermediate tier, bringing members closer to the National tier. Also, by removing the Area tier, it takes away the problem of finding members to fill Area committee posts. The current age restriction is lifted giving more people chance to join 18 Plus and also puts the emphasis on activities and events. Essential administration is conducted by paid staff. Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman then said the financial situation of the Federation needed rebalancing if 18 Plus is to survive and by making the changes proposed in this Option, income and expenditure can be matched with budgets already made. Costs reductions have already been made on office accommodation and with a reduction to the staff, further reductions are made again. There will be an increase in the membership fee, which will be compensated for by

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reductions to levies. Choices of payments will be laid down so that the fee could be spread over the year and reduced levies will give Groups greater flexibility on how to spend their money. Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman said this Option gives the Federation a future and puts the fun back into Plus.

Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon delegate asked if costs will change with ANC payments and Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman replied the cost of ANC was paid through membership income. Martin Berry, Black Country delegate asked why Life membership fee had been changed from 6 times the annual fee to 7 times the annual fee and was told it needed to be raised slightly to cover operating costs. He also asked if a new member wanted to pay by quarterly would he have to pay the first instalment by cheque and was told yes and it was arranged like this so that new members did not feel they had a large amount of money to pay out initially if they could not do so. Martin Berry, Black Country delegate then asked why standing order had been discussed not direct debit and was told this way suited the Federation better, after discussions with the bank. He asked lastly how reminder letters would be sent out, would it be by e-mail and was told yes, eventually. Sharon Law, Redbridge delegate asked if current Life members would have to pay the additional year's fee and was told there would be no change. She went on to say that currently, her Group's subs paid for the hire of the hall and felt that a 25% increase was too much, but was reminded that membership fees and levies were already being paid, this way, the money would be kept within the Group and not paid out on National levies. Sharon Law, Redbridge delegate then asked what would happen to smaller Groups who relied on Area committee to support them and Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman told her this would be the job of the Area representative.

Chris Brandon, Northwich delegate said that in the presentation it was said any rise in the membership fee would be inflation related, but in the printed document it said the membership fee would be determined by the NEC, could this be clarified and was told that the NEC would determine it but would keep it in line with inflation. Ian Oliver, Black Country observer said that assuming the membership fee would be increased due to lack of members, how many members would be needed to keep the Federation running in 2007/2008? Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman referred him to the budget, showing 611 members. Ian Oliver, Black Country observer said that under the current structure, members do not feel part of a unified Federation, but this Option says this structure will bring Groups closer to National – how will this be done? Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman said that with activities being run by Groups and National this would be done then. Also, the Area representative's job would be to communicate between Groups and National. Finally, Ian Oliver, Black Country observer said there is an opinion in the Federation, this National Lead Option was too near to the current structure, so how can it be shown that this Option will succeed? Wayne Fenton, National Chairman said this could apply to all the Options. Stephen Sykes, Didcot delegate said that given an increase is required in memberships by 2007, what effect will the membership fee increase have on attracting new members and was told the figures had actually been budgeted. He went on to say that without Areas there would be no Area diary and was told it would all be done by National.

Mark Randall, Black Country observer said that, as no Training Officer had been elected at this ANC, how did the NEC believe that this Option would make it easier to recruit National Officers and was told the National structure would make no difference. Mark Randall, Black Country observer then asked who would be responsible for ANC training as currently it is done by Area and finally, who would keep the National tier in check if the Area tier was gone. Joe Gurney, East Anglia Area Chairman said the Area level was not going just the Area Committee and the Area representative would be the liaison point between Groups and National. Rita Grimes, National Honorary Life Member asked why the annual renewal was being discontinued for Life Members, how would active and non-active members be determined? She was told that at the moment there had been no differentiation. She went on to ask how quarterly payments could not turn into a three-month membership and was told this was why payment had to be made one month in advance.

Celia Brandon, Northwich delegate said that with the Office staff reduced to one, what contingency plans did the NEC have to cover sickness or holidays and was told the HGS and Finance Officer would be responsible. Martin Posner, Romford delegate asked how this National Option could help the smaller Groups. Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman replied that the Area representative would do this. Janet Rintoul, Oxford delegate also asked how it could be expected for one individual to be responsible for all this and how difficult would it be to recruit the Area representative and was told a deputy could be elected if the job was too much for one person.

Dave Filer, Coventry delegate asked if it could be clarified who had done the research for plans and budgets and was told the NEC during the last year both by themselves and feedback from members.

## **18 PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BY JOHN SMITH AND TRACY THORN ON THE MEMBER LEAD OPTION**

John Smith, Northern Area Chairman and Tracy Thorn, North Thames & Chiltern Area Chairman introduced the Member Lead Option by saying that there had been a steady decline in membership over the last few years. Tracy Thorn, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman said that even though this year some Areas had improved their membership figures, overall there had been a decline in figures. She went on to say that high running costs and low income were causing problems financially, having to spend the some of the reserve funds. John Smith, Northern Area Chairman continued by saying that the Member Lead Option would help reduce costs and cut red tape by having just one organising committee to run the whole of the Federation and cutting Office costs. He explained the general structure would be members, the NEC consisting of the General Purposes Committee, Project Officers and the Office, albeit with reduced staff. Total posts would be reduced at National and there would be no need for Area and Group committees. Currently a third of all members in the Federation hold committee posts.

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The National tier would be responsible for the legal framework, insurances, keeping membership records and setting membership fees, management of national finances and bank accounts, keeping the events diary, looking after the national web site producing bulk postings to include items such as Plus News and management of the Office.

Tracy Thorn, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairmen went on to explain under this Option it was planned to keep the Office as it was felt that the location of the Office was about the best value for money in the country and the staff provided an invaluable amount of experience to the Federation. John Smith, Northern Area Chairman continued by saying that things the members would gain from this Option was less committee work, a quarterly bulk posting giving all the activities available. Members would be able to communicate through Plus News, the web site would be expanded and possibly a directory of members also available. Tracy Thorn, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairmen said it was intended to reduce costs drastically for the ANC through this Option by making it a one day event to be held in a more fun and cheaper location, accessible to all members and each member to pay to attend the conference with one member one vote arrangement, with the majority coming down from 75% to 66%. She went on to say that it is wished to introduce a one-fee membership, to avoid taxing.

John Smith, Northern Area Chairman then told the Conference that incidental activities would be run by National and any member or Group can organise the events. Areas will be abolished in this Option but it may be possible in the future to appoint local activities co-ordinators to run more local events.

Tracy Thorn, North Thames & Chilterns Area went on to say that, under this Option, any Group, whatever size, will be able to be run in whichever way they see fit, as financial restrains will have been removed by not being taxed from National. It also gives Groups the freedom to try new things as their will be no constitutional requirements to run Groups in a certain way, nor will there be an upper age range or any upper tier Groups and no Direct Members. John Smith, Northern Area Chairman said that currently the income comes from Memberships, Area and Group event levies and weekly subscriptions and expenditure exceeds income. Under the new Option the membership fee would be £55 per year and no other charges. The NEC would introduce membership incentives from time to time.

Tracy Thorn, North Thames & Chilterns Area then said to look at the future, the past must first be looked at. 18 Plus started off as a debating society in the north, male only and the Federation of today is very different. The NEC believes the Federation must be moved into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and they believe this Member Lead Option gives everyone the opportunity to do so. John Smith, Northern Area Chairman said this Option is the best way forward into the future. He then summarised the Option again and he and Tracy Thorn urged the members to vote for this change.

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Giles Kirby, West Kent delegate asked how much delegate fees would be if the ANC was held at, for example, Brean and Tracy Thorn, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman said this was used only as an example and costs could not be worked out yet. Giles Kirby, West Kent delegate then queried if the one member, one vote, meant exactly that and would membership fees increase in the future and was told it was and fees could be increased in the future at some point. Sharon Law, Redbridge delegate asked how local events could be organised, and was told the members themselves could organise these. Mark Randall, Black Country observer asked if, when the budgets were put together, was it taken into account potential loss of earnings for members not renewing and was told no as it was not believed this would affect the budget, as a result of perceived increase in memberships. He went on to ask why Coventry was not classed as a “more fun” location, to which he was told that staying in a hotel would cost more than such accommodation as was used by, for example, Brean. Matthew Dickinson, Hounslow delegate then asked if Groups were still able to run bank accounts and would National be able to help if there were problems with particular members and was told this would be the Group’s responsibility. Martin Berry, Black Country delegate said he had three questions; with the Member Lead Option, how would new members be vetted and was told there would be no difference then to how Direct Members join now; he then asked how one member, one vote option would allow motions to be amended and was told yes; lastly, he asked how an increase in the membership fee could be justified when half the structure would be lost and was told this was not really a fair question.

Kath Bloe, So’ton Friends observer asked if there was only one Office staff, how would they cope with National bulk postings and the reply was the NEC would assist. Kath Bloe, then asked how members could be recruited if there were no Groups as such and was told by National publicity and if Regional officers were appointed in the future, they could organise local publicity. Stephen Thomas, So’ton Friends delegate said he was concerned with the one member, one vote policy and what provisions had been made for those members not attending an ANC and was told written questions could be sent in. Rob Blanks, Abingdon delegate asked if the name would be changed and was told the Federation would use the word “Members” instead of “Groups”. He then asked how people would gain experience currently gained at Area level and was told this would be handed down through the Federation. Ellen White, Rothwell delegate said if the ANC was to be reduced to one day, would matters for discussion have to be scaled down and was told this would be easier if everyone was on site the night before, an earlier start could be made. Phil Bettis, Lichfield observer then asked about future events, how would any surplus made be collected and was told the money would go to National, as all events would be National events. National would forward money for costs to the organiser before the event and after the event any money remaining would be paid back to National. For smaller events, such as a theatre trip, money would be collected from the member directly. Robert Jones, Bradford delegate asked where all the funds would go that Areas and Groups currently have and was told Area funds would go to National and Groups that decided to close, their money would go to National and those that decided to stay together, the money would stay where it was.

**19 PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BY TINA BUNYAN AND HUW MORRIS ON THE AREA LEAD OPTION**

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate opened this presentation, by saying that the current membership figures were appalling. The total figures for 2004 were 587 Full members and numbers were still falling. The net expenditure for 2004 was £32,611, working out at over £55 per Full member. The main expenditure came from the Office and support costs - £25, 524 for 2004; working out at £43 per Full member. This figure is way out of line for what is sensible and the Federation can no longer afford an Office, even with reduced staff. The Area Lead Option starts with closing the Office and retaining as much as is possible as the current 18 Plus system. Huw Morris, Oxford delegate went on to explain that this Option would close the Office, staff are either made redundant or retire, Groups remain as they are with no levies, Areas remain as they are and take on responsibilities for memberships, National remains but with fewer responsibilities and vastly reduced budget. The average member should see very little difference in the day to day running of the Federation; events will still be run as Group, Area or National events and the ANC is abolished. In this present day, the Internet will be widely used to compensate for the loss of the Office. Communication by e-mail can be used to a greater extent. He went on to say that all Options show that a National tier is needed with overall authority, but brought down with the basic minimal functions only.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate went on to say the National tier would to arrange the Federation's insurance, manage the Federation's bank accounts, set the membership fee, set the Area levy, train Areas how to fit in with the overall running of the organisation, maintain a National diary, to conduct publicity campaigns, maintain the web page and publish a magazine exclusively on line.

National would not issue memberships, run events or open or close Groups. The non-executive committee would consist of National Chairman, National Administrator, National Treasurer and the executive committee would consist of one representative from each Area, each member of the executive committee having a vote. The National tier would also comprise of National Officers – Publicity, Training, Magazine Editor and National Web Master. Vice Presidents would be in a purely advisory role. Terms of Office would be for one year and there would be no limited number of terms the Officers would serve, with the exception of the Treasure, for three terms. The Areas would need a Chairman, Administrator and Treasurer and should try and fill other roles as Activities, Development, Training, Publicity and General Committee Members and an Area Membership Officer, to issue membership cards and retain records. Each Area would have its' own directory, supplying this to the National Administrator, who will still keep a single National directory. All Area posts terms of office will be as of that for National. Groups remain unchanged except for the terms of office, which will be as for National and Area and hold General Meetings annually and not bi-annually.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate went on to explain that National would be funded by a flat rate levy from each Area. This was carefully considered and decided that Areas should not be penalised for being successful and Area levies should not be increased because it has expanded.

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Flat rate levy will be the easiest system to implement and not open to abuse. The levy will be equivalent to membership fees of just twenty members, any members in Areas over that figure will be for the Area to keep. Areas would be funded directly from the Groups, as Groups will not need the money under the Area Lead Option as all levies for Groups have been eliminated, therefore, whatever money a Group generates from its' subscriptions it keeps. This Option is a good one for Groups from a financial point of view.

There is no place in this Option for an ANC. An ANC is extremely expensive for members and Groups, with the levies charged. Huw Morris, Oxford delegate reflected then on the current structure of an ANC and said instead of this, Areas would have four meetings a year and the information would be passed on to National, who would also hold four meetings a year. Any motions brought to the National meetings, having been passed at an Area meeting, could then be taken by the other Areas back to their members for debate. A motion would then be carried if the majority of Areas supported it. This would not be any less democratic, as no motion would be passed on until voted on by the Groups. There could be less flexibility this way, especially in the case of amended motions, but this could be done over the Internet, via e-mail. There would be only one National Constitution, which all Areas and Groups would have to abide by. Any Area acting outside the Constitution, National would have the power to whatever is needed to bring the Area into line.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said that Southern Area were the architects of this Option and that Southern Area was made up of a number of small Groups and had 15% of memberships but 26% of the votes at this ANC and they are supporting this Option as they feel it is right for the Federation.

As with all the Options presented, this one is facing up to the current problems of the organisation. If there were more members and Groups, then the ANC could easily be revived.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate then said the Area Lead Option would maintain the current age range, new members being over 18 and under 36 years of age and existing members being able to renew after their 36<sup>th</sup> birthday and those over this age only being able to stand for committee posts if there are no younger candidates able to do the job. Quest Groups will continue to exist in the Area Lead Option. Direct Members will have to join a Group and it will be their own responsibility to keep contact with their Group.

All National events will become National Scale Events and will be run by an Area and still entered into the National Diary so they do not clash, but there will be no more levies. Areas could sell shares in events to other Areas if they so wish. National will only be allowed to buy shares in the Easter holiday but Areas will have priority.

All monies will stay where it is, under the Area Lead Option. The Federation will de-register with VAT.

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Fixed assets will be disposed of, so that there will be no depreciation and additional savings can be made on meetings only lasting one day. Insurance will be lower, with no office or staff and the budget prepared by the National Treasurer will be substantially simpler. It is envisaged that the National budget can be reduced to £3,000. An Area should be able to make a surplus from membership fees and hopefully, in time, fund events by themselves. The Area Lead Option would benefit from a virtual office, but it is not a necessity.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate then summed up by saying the Area Lead Option is a low spend, low cost Option designed to address specific problems faced today, which are not enough members to justify the costs being spent on an Office. Opportunities can be grasped and they include use of the Internet and e-mail for postings and recruitment. This Option also retains a strong structure at Group, Area and National tier, which is particularly important to the running of the Federation. This Option is the best one to allow the Federation to continue and grow.

Huw Morris, Oxford delegate then replied to questions asked from the floor, starting with Giles Kirby, West Kent delegate said that it was mentioned that each Area would hold a conference similar to an ANC, but what would happen if one Area passed a motion but the others rejected it? The reply was that, as currently, then it would not be passed. Giles Kirby, then asked how much the membership fee would be and was told £25. Ian Oliver, Black Country observer asked who would take responsibility for membership cards, would there be a national database and would there be a universal card or would each Area have their own cards? Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said this was laid out in the Option, the National Administrator would distribute blank cards to each Area Membership Officer. The National Administrator would also keep the National directory. Ian Oliver, Black Country observer then asked if the other Area Chairmen had been approached as to how this Option might affect their Areas and was told that Huw Morris had attended NEC meetings and had discussion with Area Chairmen. Ian Oliver then asked if the Groups could change the membership fee and was told they must send £25 to National, it was up to each Group after that. He also asked if an Area closed would the levy on other Areas increase and was told yes. Ian Oliver, Black Country observer then asked if specifications and a budget had been set up for the web site and was told not yet. He asked for an explanation on the phrase "Areas will co-ordinate Groups", and was told Areas currently support Groups now and this would continue.

Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate said she was concerned there was no budget for training and development as without this how can members be brought forward into committee posts and Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said that training would all be done at Area level. No budgets were set for things like personal training, as it was felt the Federation could not afford this. Phil Bettis, Lichfield observer asked if Huw Morris could expand on how National Officers would be elected and was asked to refer to the Area Lead Option document and that each candidate could announce their intentions over the Internet. Sharon Law, Redbridge delegate then asked if Life memberships would stay the same and was told yes, and also would it be the Area meetings that Groups could introduce motions to be carried forward, to which the answer was yet.



Mark Randall, Black Country observer asked if it could be clarified that the National tier would be funded directly from charges of levies of six Areas and was told correct. He then asked for procedures should any Area not be able to fulfil their financial obligation. Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said that if an Area could not afford to exist, then it would have to close, placing extra financial obligations on the existing Areas. Mark Randall, Black Country observer then asked if, under this Option, the Areas would have more autonomy and was told no. Martin Berry, Black Country delegate said that potential amendments to motions could go out over the Internet, what would happen should questions arise over this at Area Conferences? The reply was that questions would have to go over the Internet in advance. Martin Berry, Black Country delegate then asked for clarification on what would happen in the event of a tie over a motion, should the National Chairman not have a casting vote and told it would stay with the status quo. Simon O'Connor, Barkingside observer asked, with the Office closing, what would happen with the administration if Area positions cannot be filled and is the virtual office a suitable replacement for the actual Office? Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said Areas must find members to fill committee posts or the Area will have to close and that he felt the virtual office is a good idea and going on top of this Option instead of integrating with it. Stephen Browning, Bishops Stortford delegate asked if the current Areas would be able to implement the Area Lead Option in full and was told that some Areas may struggle to fill posts. He then asked about the optimum number of Area representatives need to serve on National and Huw Morris said about six. Andy Campbell, Barkingside delegate said that with training and development budgets being reduced how would National posts be filled and was told the National posts should become easier as some of their responsibilities would be taken over by Areas.

He then asked for clarification on motions discussed at Area committees, would Area representatives have to vote how their members had voted in Area meetings and was told they would.

Corinna Teale, External PRO said that, currently, staff have to do the work because that is what they are paid for, how will volunteers be controlled the same. Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said members would have to step up and make themselves be committed to the work in hand. Stephen Sykes, Didcot delegate asked how this proposal could expand the membership and was told this Option was a restructuring one, not a publicity one, but to help memberships was the abolition of levies, leaving Groups more money for publicity. Stephen Sykes, Didcot delegate then said one point against this Option was the lack of an ANC, if, in future, it could be funded would this be possible and the reply was that a motion could be put in place to hold an ANC.

Paul West, Andover delegate asked how would HLMs and other awards be awarded in this Option and Huw Morris, Oxford delegate said it could be done via Areas and announced over the One List or Internet. Gary Schwimmer, Hillingdon delegate asked how much would weekly subs be and Huw Morris said this is for Groups to decide.

## The National Federation of 18 Plus Groups

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman, then presented £100 incentive bonus cheques to So'ton Friends and Billericay Groups.

Voting strength re-established at 62.

The Group Lead Option was the first to be debated and the opening speaker was Bekki Randall, Black Country observer saying there was only one choice out of the four Options; the National Lead does not change enough or make significant savings; Member Lead Option would remove the backbone of the Federation; Area Lead Option would divide the Federation into six separate ones; therefore the Group Lead Option is the only one to vote for as it is the only viable way forward for the Federation. Adrian Barnard, Didcot delegate felt that the Group Lead Option was not totally finished and would put quite a financial load on the Groups themselves, apart from maybe having problems filling committee posts. Adrian Barnard, Didcot delegate went on to say that he was horrified to hear, in the presentation, that the Groups' Constitution over-ruled anything – that would mean thirty-eight different Federations within the National Federation, and hoped this was a slip of the tongue. He said that with the Groups only having to pass £10 on to National this could cause a lot of competition within the Groups themselves if membership fees differed from Group to Group. He said with organising the ANC, if Groups overspent their budget, they would still be financially liable to cover the cost of this event. Kate Buse, Slough delegate said she had been a member of the Federation for many years, held lots of positions in Group and Area posts and urged delegates to vote against this motion, as it could work with large Groups who had enthusiastic members, but for smaller, less experienced members it could prove disastrous and they would not get the full benefits of the Federation as they would not have the experience of the Area to support them.

Mark Randall, Black Country observer said he believed the time for brevity was now at an end and time to get serious. He said members joined “the family” of 18 Plus and to have fun. He commented on the £10,000 to set-up the virtual office as being a maximum fee based on what could happen, once everything has been put in place. He felt that some of the comments made in this Option were not very nice and that the Group Plan was open ended, saying that there may be things that would change in the process, thus not informing members at this point in time what they could be. He urged members to vote for this Option, as it would still be a Federation of Member Groups. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer congratulated So'ton Friends on the hard work put into this document, but he had deep reservations about this Option. He said he worked in a publishing company, which used a virtual office. He did not think this could work without an Administrator – e.g. how would membership cards be sent out and Plus Products sold and posted? He felt this was too big a job for one person to manage on their own. Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer urged delegates to vote against this Option. Stephen Sykes, Didcot delegate urged members not to vote for this motion as his Group felt there were a couple of problems, for example there would still be an £18,000 cost during the first year to set up the virtual office and run the ANC. This money would be better spent on publicity rather than administration. He also said that any virtual office could run risks by items being delayed sometimes. Would the sub contractors required to set-up this scheme be reliable?

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He said there were lots of issues in Option D which seemed to present a lot of unexplained possible risks. Robert Jones, Bradford delegate said he was concerned that this virtual office could get off the ground for the money mentioned, he did not think this could be done and would it prove useful once it was set up? Sharon Law, Redbridge delegate felt that this Option does take things back to the members and if there were not two members in each Group that would organise things, then that Group had problems. She felt this Option was very innovative and could work well within the current procedures and urged members to vote for this motion.

The National Lead Option was the next Option to be debated and the opening speaker was Martin Berry, Black Country delegate who expressed Black Country's thanks to all the NEC and members who had taken the time to put these Options together for presentation at the Conference. He said his Group had discussed all the Options in great detail before coming to the ANC and said that they were in favour of the National Lead Option, as this was the most viable, even though it was cutting down on what was currently in place. It did remove a lot of red tape currently within the Federation. Opening the age range would allow a lot more people to join the Federation. It continued changes implemented at the last two ANCs. An alternative is seriously needed for e-mail for those members who cannot or are unable to access the Internet. Martin Berry, Black Country delegate then pointed out that, within the Area Lead Option, if there was no ANC, no motions would be able to be debated and voted on properly, also, there would be more members needed for committee posts. He went on to say that with the Member Lead Option, how could an additional fee be asked for when half of the structure of the Federation is being lost? With the Group Lead Option, this could cause problems if members were unable to use the Internet and urged members to vote for the National Lead Option.

Sharon Law, Redbridge delegate said that she know that some members say you cannot just look at the money alone, but to new members, this is important. She said she has been a member for eleven years, knows that there are Groups struggling financially and remembers Nicholson House being sold to pay off debts. With this Option, there would be more money going into National and urged members to vote against this motion. Joe Gurney, National Training Officer disputed the point made that money goes into National, he said Area funds would be distributed to Groups on a capita basis. Wayne Fenton, National Chairman also pointed out that Nicholson House was not sold to pay off debts. Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield observer said that it should be borne in mind that a good structure is needed for the Federation to run and this shows in the Groups who do run to a good structure. On a National basis, a good structure is still needed and to get rid of a structure will not improve the way recruitment is carried out. If the Group Lead Option is such a brilliant idea why are Groups not recruiting more members already? She urged members to vote for the National Lead Option.

Ian Oliver, Black Country observer said he had two points to make, firstly, even though his Group decided to vote for the National Lead Option, his Group was divided on this issue. He felt that, as far as part of Black Country Group was concerned, this Option was find for those that did not want to see much change made to the current structure, which is indeed failing.

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He urged members to vote against this motion. Stephen Sykes, Didcot delegate said that the National Lead Option did not put the finances on a proper, permanent position and would only work if the membership figures increased. There would still be a lot of money spent in administration, which the Federation cannot now afford.

The Member Lead Option is the next Option to be debated and the debate was opened by Lorraine Whiting, Havering delegate by saying she had read through the advantages and disadvantages and said that the National Federation of 18 Plus Groups was like a group of families and had a constitution to operate by. Under this Option, a lot of the membership fee money could disappear as though down a black hole. She said she agreed with the Area Lead Option, as there would be more support from the Areas for the Groups, dealing with health and safety and personnel issues and urged members to vote against the Member Lead Option. Andy Campbell, Barkingside delegate acknowledged all the work gone into all four of the Options and expressed his concern that they did not cover all of the problems that currently existed. He said that whichever Option was chosen today, some more work needed doing to it, such as putting more publicity out to attract new members. He said the Federation was also struggling to find new people to fill committee posts on Area and National and that it was good to see new members to the organisation at this conference coming up with new ideas. He said the financial situation was also a problem and one Option was addressing this and another Option was addressing the problem of filling committee posts, but none of them resolve all of the problems. He felt further changes were needed in the future to resolve all of the problems the Federation is facing at the present. Membership numbers must be increased for the Federation to prosper.

Matthew Bonar, Sutton Coldfield delegate said he like the one item in this Option for One Member, One Vote and the larger Groups felt that only having two delegates to represent all the members was unfair. He asked that, whichever Option was chosen, would it be possible to incorporate this item into it? Robert Jones, Bradford delegate said his biggest concern was if someone had given him the Member Lead Option to read without information on where it came from, he would have thought it belonged to “Spice” and that the Federation of 18 Plus Groups does not want to go into competition with this other organisation. Adam Redshaw, Coventry observer said that he had been to a “Spice” open evening to see how they operated and he learned that there were large events all over the place, not smaller events in local areas where you saw the same faces and had regular contact with people, therefore, he urged members to vote against this Option.

Sharon Law, Redbridge delegate said her biggest concern about the Members Lead Option is that everyone joined Plus to be part of a Group, but with this Option there is an issue of liability, no backing from Areas, no protection for Groups, whether successful or not. She felt, that under this Option, Groups could completely disappear and it does not seem to meet the criteria of 18 Plus.

Iain Parkes, Banbury delegate said he joined 18 Plus to meet new people, have fun, enjoy events and the organisation was much larger then. He said members must consider new members, when voting on these Options, as to how new members will view the organisation. He said that when he joined 18 Plus he had to pay his membership fees in instalments and had someone mentioned £44 he would have run away screaming! He said he does not feel this Option does anything to attract new members into the organisation, it does not address the locale and urged members to vote against this Option. Kate Buse, Slough delegate said she is a committed member of 18 Plus and joined because it had Groups and wanted to join in activities with like minded adults and always the events had been in her price range. She said other organisations around the country held activities which were much more expensive than 18 Plus', which is an organisation of Groups and urged members to against this Option.

The Area Lead Option is the last to be debated and the first speaker was Martin Posner, Romford delegate and said that under this proposal, his Area committee position would be safe, as Area Activities Officer and also that Area committees were able to support Groups that may be struggling, whereas with the other three Options would not be able to offer this support. He urged members to vote for the Area Lead Option. Mark Hewson, Solihull observer spoke against this Option said he was concerned that under this Option it would get very confusing for making decisions and that it would create a lot of extra work for Areas, with no structure from the top down. Sherrie Roberts, Redbridge delegate felt that this seemed to be the best Option, the membership fee was more attractive and that Groups would still have support and urged delegates to vote for this motion. Phil Bettis, Lichfield observer said that all four Options relied on Groups doing the publicity and bringing new members to keep the Federation going. He said the finances of the Federation needed to be seriously addressed, which this Option did, by closing the Office and members doing the work on a voluntary basis. He said So'ton Friends motion did this as well and congratulated Richard Morton for coming up with basically a new idea. Phil Bettis, Lichfield observer went on to say that he would urge delegates to vote for the Area Lead Option as the Group Lead Option involved too many changes and was a "step too far". Andy Campbell, Barkingside delegate said he had listened to all the points made over this weekend and felt it was an incredibly difficult call. He said his Area struggled at one point because of the lack of filled committee posts, which has now been turned around, his concern with this Option the same thing could happen to other Areas who may not be able to recover.

Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate said the Area Lead Option seemed to be the best of a bad lot. She said members now had to decide what they wanted, the status quo with the National Lead Option, the Areas to take responsibility, the Groups to take responsibility or close the Office and the members do all the work. She said she believed in the Area Lead Option or the other alternative is to go away and close the Federation! Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer said that Solihull was run the way the Federation states Groups should be run, and he said he joined 18 Plus (two decades ago!) to have fun and make new friends. He thinks the Area Lead Option has too much bureaucracy to work and also the Group Lead Option was the same. He said whilst at the moment, whilst Areas are run effectively, what happens when current post holders stand down?

Janet Rintoul, Bradford observer said that one of the issues that is disliked about the Area Option is fragmentation. She said that under this Area Option, there will still be a National Constitution, which all Areas must agree to, and that Areas can put forward motions to go to National meetings – four months apart, whereas under this current system a whole year must go by before another ANC is held for motions to be discussed. Democracy is still upheld as members may vote on items at Area Conferences. She said when she first joined 18 Plus, she wanted a social life and new friends. Under the Area Lead Option, the membership fee covers Group nights and Area activities, therefore giving better value for money.

Giles Kirby, West Kent delegate said he had been a member of 18 Plus for less than a year and joined to improve his social life. The membership fee has been of great concern to his Group and they do not want to see it increased too much. His main concern about the Area Lead Option is the lack of the ANC and this was an important event. By having to have motions debated at NEC meetings, if there are questions to be answered and have to go back to Area, this could still take anything up to a year. He urged delegates to vote against the Area Lead Option and to keep the ANC. Stephen Sykes, Didcot delegate said he was glad that the previous speaker had spoken about the ANC because that was what he wanted to comment on. He said the lack of an ANC in the Area Lead Option, which he thought, was a problem, but this Option was chosen to cut the finances and the ANC was costing £8,000 per year to run. If it was felt, in the future, members needed an ANC, it could always be re-introduced. He went on to say there need be no fear of fragmentation, as the Area would be bound by the National Constitution.

Matthew Bonar, Sutton Coldfield delegate said he would like to the main concerns his Area had was that there was no budget in this Option, so how could things be funded, also it seemed that different Areas may want to go in their own direction so there would be no National identity, issues over redundancy costs for the staff and also that there could be greater difficulties in filling committee posts. He also felt that it was a huge time consuming process with motions and ideas going backwards and forwards between Area/Group meetings and National. He urged members to vote against this Option.

Robert Jones, Bradford delegate said his concerns were that current events and activities were enjoyed by everyone and that they work under the current system, under the Area Lead Option they running of them would have to be changed. His other concern was to do with Area support as there would be no National tier to go to for, for example, financial assistance, so who would Areas be able to turn to then? Hazel Bunker, Barkingside delegate wondered what would happen if an Area closed, due to lack of filled positions, would it merge with another? There is no back up in this Option and urged members to vote against this motion. Steven Thomas, So'ton delegate said reminded members of the National Chairman's opening remarks of the most important thing is to go out and get new members. He said that it is seen that 18 Plus is in decline and any Option that has a price increase goes against common sense. The Area Option places a heavy load on Area members and if key members are not there in the future it could spiral into some sort of decline.

He says many people have come to the microphone to say they joined Plus because they wanted to have fun and because of the Groups, no one has said they joined because of the Area. He also agreed with a previous speaker that this Option is limited in its' growth, so therefore there would have to be a new structure again at some point. He said 18 Plus needs to grow fast, empower the Groups to go out and get new members in for the Federation to survive.

Corinna Teale, Sutton Coldfield observer/External PRO said she would like to raise a point that votes cannot be bought by reducing the membership fee. The future of the Federation is at stake here, cheap membership must not sidestep the reality of the situation. She urged members to vote against this Option. Ian Oliver, Black Country observer said this was not a viable Option for all Areas and could cause extreme problems for at least one, there seems to be no apparent compassion or concern that Areas may close and possibly lose Groups and members. This would not be very encouraging news for new members. There will be no ANC if this Option does not work and no way to put the clock back for any damage done to the Federation. There is a lack of National accountability. National decision will be banded up and down before any decision is reached and could slow down the whole process of change. This is the first step to becoming a Group structured Federation. He agreed with a previous speaker that it still could take up to a year for decisions to be made going back and forth to NEC meetings. He asked how long would it take and what would it cost to re-introduce the ANCs and urged delegates to vote against this motion.

Gerry Edwards, Vice President/National Executive Officer then explained to the Conference about the voting procedure by saying that this would be an exhaustive ballot, a formal proportional representation to ensure getting the right result. He said a ballot paper would be given to delegates with all four Options on, but they can only vote for one. Once these votes have been counted, if any Option has more than 50% on the first count, this is the Option that will be accepted. If this does not happen, the Option with the lowest vote will drop out, ballot papers will be re-issued and the remaining three will then be voted on. If then a 50% majority is not reached and third ballot will take place.

Voting strength re-established at 62.

## **20 FACILITY FOR NATIONAL DEBATE**

Adam Redshaw, National Development Officer opened the National Debate by apologising for not bringing the National DVD to the Conference, but had brought the work in progress, which has been on show this week. Adam Redshaw then asked for help and technical advice and also what do members think should or should not be included. An unnamed speaker said it was one of the best ideas for a long time and needed to be sorted and sent out to show what 18 plus is all about. Tracy Thorn, North Thames & Chilterns Area Chairman asked how much per disc would it cost, and Adam Redshaw replied approximately, excluding filming and editing costs, under £2.00 per disc.

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Ian Crawshaw, Plus News Editor said he would like to buy a copy and suggested it be made available and bring some money into the Federation. Richard Morton, So'ton Friends delegate asked what the target audience was, as this could change the content and how long it would play for. Adam Redshaw replied this would be eased by menu options, as it is important to show every aspect of the Federation to everybody.

Adrian Barnard, Didcot delegate thanked Adam for bringing this item to fruition finally and also thanked Iain for starting the project off and doing a lot of work in preparation. He said that he joined a Group that was fairly insular and initially did not know much about the Federation until he got hold of a copy of the National Video and he has not stopped since! Adam Redshaw asked Adrian how he obtained his copy and was told he bought it after joining 18 Plus. Matthew Bonar, Sutton Coldfield delegate asked if there were any profiles from certain key members and was told yes and was already on the DVD. Another unnamed speaker asked if Groups would be able to copy this DVD or would the copyright prevent it and was told it would be no problem.

Gerry Edwards/Vice President, National Executive Officer then announced the results of the ballot:-

National Lead = 16 votes; Area Lead = 36 votes; Member Lead = 0 votes; Group Lead = 10 votes

The Area Lead Option has been voted on and accepted by the Federation.

**21 ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN TO SERVE FROM MONDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2005**

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman announced the results of the vote for the position of National Chairman.

Abstentions – 3; Against – 3; thereby Wayne Fenton is duly elected as National Chairman, to serve from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

**22 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ELECTION RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL OFFICERS TO SERVE FROM MONDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2005.**

Donna Verrall, Honorary General Secretary announced the results of the ballot for the National Officers, as follows:-

Honorary General Secretary Francis Wallington  
3 abstentions; 4 against; 52 for.

National Finance Officer Andy Cole  
3 abstentions; 3 against; 54 for

National Development Officer Adam Redshaw  
1 abstentions; 3 against; 54 for



National Activities Officer

Dave Filer

2 abstentions; 5 against; 53 for

### **23 NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS**

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman then addressed the Conference by thanking the NEC, Huw Morris, So'ton Friends for all their hard work put into drawing up the Options for this weekend. He said they had all got through the Conference, despite the unusual start! He applauded the way the Constitution has been used to aid the debate. Wayne Fenton, National Chairman then announced that he would not stand now as National Chairman. He said it was personal reasons, which brought him to this decision, which he did not wish to announce. He said he would stay on as National Chairman until 16<sup>th</sup> May 2005 and a new National Chairman would be co-opted from the NEC at the July meeting. Wayne Fenton said he had enjoyed the Conference and would now say some thank yous and give some surprises. Francis Wallington was the first to be thanked; then the office staff Christine George and Sue Swan; then Tony Burgess; Donna Verrall; Gerry Edwards and Andy Cole who all received a personal gift from Wayne, and then he thanked each NEC member personally with a small gift for all their hard work and commitment.

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman then went on to say a few more thank yous to the hotel staff, the ANC Chairman and Bookings Officer, Adam Redshaw, Mark and Katie Hawkins, Ian Crawshaw, who also received a special thanks from the office staff for his hard work on the newsletter. He finished by saying the debating had gone extremely well this weekend and hoped members would give the NEC a lot of help and support in implementing this Area Lead Option. He thanked everyone for their support during the last year and wished the NEC good luck.

Ian Oliver, Black Country delegate then thanked Wayne for all he had done for the Federation and wished him well for the future.

Andy Cole, London & South East Area Chairman/Deputy National Chairman then announced that it was with regret the he would resign as National Finance Officer elect.

### **24 ELECTION OF HONORARY SENIOR OFFICIALS**

**24:1 Vice President**

**Gerry Edwards**

**24:2 Honorary Life Members**

**Donna Verrall  
Tony Burgess**

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman then informed the conference that as of 16<sup>th</sup> May 2005, Tina Bunyan would be Deputy National Chairman until the July NEC meeting.

**25 APPOINTMENT OF THE ACCOUNTANTS**

Andy Cole, East Anglia Area Chairman/deputy National Chairman proposed Kingscott Dix as the Federation's Accountant.

CARRIED

**26 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

Mark Hewson, Solihull observer asked for clarification on the membership fee, where the fees had to be sent and were Area levies still to be paid. He was told the Federation would operate as current until the Area Lead Option came into being in January 2006.

Jarrett Smith, NGOOT organiser then thanked the office staff for doing his mailing and copying and promoted NGOOT by outlining its programme and said it was to be held just outside of Bristol at an activity centre.

Lara Collins, Brentwood delegate thanked the office staff for all their hard work. She then asked the Conference if they wanted her to run Brean in 2006.

Ian Crawshaw, Plus News Editor asked if he could come forward and take a photograph.

Martin Berry, Black Country delegate promoted the National Treasure Hunt in Birmingham in July.

Pete Strawbridge, Solihull observer said as a Group member, ex-Area Chairman thanked Christine & Sue for doing a brilliant job in the Office. He suggested as there would be no future ANCs that there be held an annual Dinner/Dance, similar to that held in the evening of the ANC.

Andy Campbell, Barkingside delegate suggested that whatever form a conference may take now, there be time set aside for National debate.

Adam Redshaw, National Development Officer nominated himself as National Chairman. Wayne Fenton, National Chairman informed him he would have to attend the July NEC meeting, as the post had not been advertised within the Federation. Martin Posner, Romford delegate proposed Adam Redshaw's nomination be accepted for National Chairman today. Wayne Fenton, National Chairman said there might be other members, not able to be at the Conference, who may wish to put in a nomination for the post of National Chairman. Martin Posner, Romford delegate then withdrew his motion.

**27 ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE DATE AND VENUE OF THE 65<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

None, under the Area Lead Option.

**28 PRESIDENTIAL CLOSING ADDRESS BY GERRY EDWARDS, VICE PRESIDENT**

Gerry Edwards, Vice President/National Executive Officer opened his speech by saying it had been an interesting and challenging weekend. He said debate had gone well and personalities had been kept out, in fact it had been the best set of debates he had heard for a long time. He made a few lighthearted remarks about various events and members over the weekend, as this is something he likes to do! He said he enjoyed the Plus Stars during the Saturday evening, and even though this is the last ANC, it has been about the best.

Gerry Edwards, Vice President/National Executive Officer went on to say that this year's Conference has been bigger than last year and an increase in delegates, which is good to see. He said two Areas have increased their membership, Northern by 12% and North Thames and Chilterns by 5%. This shows it is possible to enlist new members and all members must think positive to recruit. He said the restructuring will only work if members go out and deliver what is promised. To encourage members to stay, as well as new members join, they must be offered something worthwhile.

Gerry Edwards, Vice President/National Executive Officer thanked everyone who had taken the time to put the presentations together and said how hard they had worked to do so. He said a clear mandate had been made at this Conference and asked that everyone, whether or not they voted for the winning Option, to all work together to make it work. He went on to thank Wayne Fenton, National Chairman for all that he has done for the Federation, especially for the work done to help with organising the restructuring documents. Gerry Edwards, Vice President/National Executive Officer also thanked Christine and Sue for their hard work and support from the Office; Andy Cole for standing for National Finance Officer, even though he has now stood down; Donna Verrall for her work as Honorary General Secretary and Tony Burgess as National Finance Officer.

Gerry Edwards, Vice President/National Executive Officer closed his speech by thanking members for inviting him to be Vice President, for attending the Conference, which has been the best for many years and wished everyone a safe journey home.

**29 CLOSURE OF CONFERENCE BY THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN**

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman wished everyone a safe journey home and asked delegates to take their Group Name Boards home to their Groups, as there would be no more ANCs. He asked everyone, even those who did not agree with the Area Lead Option, to all work together to make this work.

Wayne Fenton, National Chairman then closed the 2005 Annual National Conference.

ANC2005/FW/cg